

Shakespeare plot analysis instructions, 2/16/18

Y2 students:

As you know, your Shakespeare assignment for the next few weeks includes not only watching 5 plays, but also turning in an analysis of them.

Here are the instructions on how to execute this assignment.

- Type up the assignment and email it to me like any other essay assignment.
- Supply a header as normal for any essay assignment
- Also supply a header for each section (Plot analysis, Characters, and Theme).
- Double-space.
- The analysis may exceed one page, but try to keep it under two.
- **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** Plagiarism is when you copy someone else's words, pretending that they are your own. It's when you quote someone else, but you do not say that it is a quote, nor do you supply a citation. This is cheating and will result in an automatic 0. There are a lot of plot analysis "out there" and it is tempting to use them for this assignment. Don't do it. Use them to understand the play, then write about the play IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Even copying someone else's analysis and changing a few words is still plagiarism. Use your own words.
- No quotes are necessary.
- Turn in each play in a separate file. Do not try to put all plays into the same file.
- You can find more information about this exercise on pages 12 – 15 in the "Ideas Moving Into Culture Through The Fine Arts" section of the Syllabus. Please note there are more than one "pages 12 – 15", so be sure you are in the right section. If you look in this section, you will see one more item that the Syllabus requires called "World View". Skip this item for each play; that will be included in the "World View of Shakespeare" essay.
- The five plays you are required to watch and report on are:
 1. Hamlet: Recommend the Kenneth Branagh or Mel Gibson version.
 2. Henry V: Recommend the Kenneth Branagh version.
 3. Macbeth: Some students say the Patrick Stewart version is good. I saw the Ian McKellen version and it's ok, but very minimalist.
 4. Measure for Measure. We will see this in class.
 5. Student's choice. Here are some recommendations:
 1. Much Ado About Nothing: Caution – the Kenneth Branagh/Denzel Washington version has an inappropriate scene at the beginning (and to a lesser extent, one in the middle, too), but I am not sure which version to use instead.
 2. Mid Summer's Night's Dream
 3. 12th Night

4. Two Gentlemen of Verona

- Before you watch the plays, there is some instruction that I think will be very helpful to understand them, actually enjoy them, and to write up the analysis.
 1. Decide ahead of time which play you will watch.
 2. For that play read summary from sparknotes.com/shakespeare, Monarch notes, Cliff Notes, or pinkmonkey.com. You can purchase these at Half Price Books, read them online, or borrow them from the library. Watch for the themes these synopsis bring out. If you lift a quote from the notes, however, and put it in your essay, it is an automatic F. Use notes to get the themes, watch for them in the play, and then write about them in your own words.
 3. Get the complete works of Shakespeare (called "The Riverside Shakespeare) for 5 -10 bucks or less at Half Price Books.
 4. Watch the play with the closed-captioned words turned on. That way you can refer to the words if you have a hard time understanding the pronunciation (as I do).
- Here's an example of the format of the analysis:

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October 20th, 2010

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Plot:

*Tell the story of the play. This needs to be a complete paragraph. **Like most essay paragraphs, it must be at least 8 lines.** It could start out something like this: The play centers around two men, Valentine and Proteus, and two women, Julia and Silvia. Valentine and Proteus are close friends who eventually fall in love with the same girl, Silvia. Initially, Proteus loves Julia, openly declaring his love for her. ...*

Characters:

*This contains the name and several complete sentences for 10 characters. You will need to include all the major characters and possibly some of the minor ones. It is NOT a complete paragraph; instead it is a list. Do NOT simply write a short phrase about each character. Should not be a complete paragraph, but you must write in complete sentences. **Analysis of major characters should be at least 4 lines each.** Minor characters may be less. For example:*

Valentine: A practical, sharp, and faithful man whose friend's betrayal tests his loyalty in a love triangle. He pursues Silvia only to have his friend Proteus cause his banishment from the city. All three eventually meet together, Proteus begs forgiveness, and friendship trumps love in Valentine; he forgives, giving Silvia to Proteus. In the end, however, Valentine even wins the hand of Silvia.

...

Theme:

*This explains the messages or lessons that Shakespeare wanted to communicate to the audience. They are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. **It must be a complete paragraph of at least 6 lines.** It is NOT a rewording of the plot. For example, it could start out like this: There are at least for main themes in this play. One of them is the theme common in Elizabethan plays where the parent (usually the father) interferes with the true love of his children. Proteus loves Julia, but his father sends him away to complete his learning; he must*

leave Julia. Valentine loves Silvia, but her father will not allow them to marry because he wants his daughter to marry the rich but undesirable Thurio. The second theme is that of unrequited love... The themes are not to be confused with motifs, which are recurring structures, contrasts, and literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes. For example, in Hamlet, a theme is the revenge, while a motif is death.

In the above description the *italics* are simply my comments as to what to write. You will remove my words there and replace them with your own, and put them in normal font. However, you may use my examples if you wish.

Mr. Woolsey